

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY LISBON

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E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR, PO

SUBJECT: AZORES BASE TALKS: JUNE 24 MEETING

REF: LISBON 4717

1. FOLLOWING IS RECORD OF INFORMAL JUNE 24 MEETING OF
PORTUGUESE FOREIGN MINISTRY AZORES NEGOTIATOR JOSE VILLAS-
BOAS WITH AMBASSADOR CARLUCCI, DCM AND DEPTOFF.

2. VILLAS-BOAS REPORTED THAT GENERAL WILTON PERREIRA, ARMED
FORCES REP ON GOP TASK FORCE, HAD REACTED WELL TO JUNE 17
MEETING. HE REALIZED PROBLEMS WE HAD WITH INFRASTRUCTURE
REQUESTS, BUT HAD NO READY SOLUTION. HE WAS AGONIZING OVER
PROBLEM AND WOULD TAKE IT UP WITH MILITARY SUPERIORS, IN-
CLUDING PRESIDENT EANES. PERREIRA HAD NOT YET COMMUNICATED
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A REACTION TO VILLAS-BOAS, WHO EXPECTED IT WEEK OF JUNE 27
RE AZOREANS, THEY HAD NOT BEEN IN TOUCH WITH VILLAS-BOAS
SINCE JUNE 17 MEETING, BUT HE DID NOT ASCRIBE ANY ULTERIOR
MOTIVE TO THIS BEYOND THEIR NORMAL MEASURED REACTION-TIME
PLUS THEIR USUAL SUSPICION OF ANYONE FROM LISBON.

3. WE DISCUSSED CANDIDLY BUT CONFIDENTIALLY WITH VILLAS-

BOAS THE CONGRESSIONAL FACTOR AND UNDESIRABILITY OF OVERT

LINKAGE BETWEEN BASE AGREEMENT AND LOAN PACKAGE. VILLAS-BOAS SAW THE POINT AND AGREED TANGIBLE EVIDENCE OF PROGRESS WOULD BE DESIRABLE, BUT HE HAD FEW CONCRETE IDEAS HOW TO MOVE THE AZOREANS ALONG. AS AN EXAMPLE OF THE ISLANDERS' HYPER-SUSPICIOUSNESS, HE TOLD US--AND ASKED THAT IT BE HELD IN STRICT CONFIDENCE--THAT THE AZOREANS HAD PROTESTED THE FACT THAT RENEWAL OF THE BASE AGREEMENT HAD BEEN DISCUSSED IN WASHINGTON. VILLAS-BOAS HAD EXPLAINED TO THEM THAT THE BASE RENEWAL HAD NOT, IN FACT, BEEN "DISCUSSED" BUT HAD COME UP IN PASSING DURING A REVIEW OF US-PORTUGUESE RELATIONS. THEY WERE NOT MOLLIFIED, HOWEVER. VILLAS-BOAS CHARACTERIZED THIS AZOREAN ATTITUDE AS "UNREALISTIC" AND SAID THAT FONMIN MEDEIROS FERREIRA SHARED THIS VIEW.

4. NEXT STEPS: VILLAS-BOAS ADVISED WAITING UNTIL WEEK OF JULY 1 WHEN HE EXPECTED TO HAVE A RESPONSE FROM BOTH THE MILITARY AND THE AZOREANS TO JUNE 17 MEETING. HBOTELTEED SUFFICIENT PROGRESS WOULD BE REGISTERED BETWEEN NOW AND THE JULY MARK-UP OF THE US LOAN CONTRIBUTION TO HELP WITH THE CONGRESS. WE DISCUSSED IN HYPOTHETICAL TERMS THE OUTLINE OF AN ILLUSTRATIVE ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM FOR THE AZORES (PARA 14 REFTEL), INCLUDING POSSIBLE PL 480, CCC, HOUSING INVESTMENT GUARANTEES, ETC., OUTSIDE THE FORMAL BASE RENEWAL AGREEMENT. WE LEFT HIM ON A CONFIDENTIAL CONFIDENTIAL

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BASIS A "NON PAPER" ON SUCH AN AZOREAN AID PACKAGE WHICH HE SEEMED TO FIND INTERESTING AND CONSTRUCTIVE.

5. WE ALSO SET FORTH IN DETAIL CONGRESSIONAL FACTORS OF WHICH THE PORTUGUESE MILITARY SHOULD BE AWARE AS THEY RECONSIDER THEIR INFRASTRUCTURE REQUESTS, POINTING OUT THAT INFRASTRUCTURE IS NOT A REALISTIC POSSIBILITY, UNLESS IT MEETS JOINT-USE AND OTHER CRITERIA DISCUSSED IN JUNE 17 MEETING WITH DOD REP. WE ALSO SUGGESTED THAT IF THE MILITARY KNEW THE DEGREE TO WHICH OUR PROPOSAL OF \$60 MILLION PLUS PL 480, CCC AND EXIM CREDITS MIGHT SATISFY AZOREAN ASPIRATIONS--IF WE CAN EVER GET THEM TO FOCUS ON SPECIFICS--THEY MIGHT BE MORE RELAXED ABOUT ACCEPTING EQUIPMENT. VILLAS-BOAS SAID THESE WERE TWO IMPORTANT POINTS THAT HE WOULD CLARIFY WITH WILTON PERREIRA.

6. WE ALSO DISCUSSED THE DESIRABILITY AND THE FEASIBILITY OF REGISTERING ON PAPER THE PROGRESS MADE THUS FAR DURING INFORMAL TALKS AND MODALITIES THEREOF, POINTING OUT HOW THIS COULD HELP WITH CONGRESS. VILLAS-BOAS SAID HE UNDERSTOOD THE PROBLEM, BUT THAT HIS FREEDOM OF MANEUVER WAS LIMITED BY THE AZOREAN ISSUE. HE WOULD GIVE SERIOUS

THOUGHT TO HOW THE GOP COULD BE HELPFUL. VANCE

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